

TOLLES-PARSONS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report to the Board of Selectmen
February 25, 2013

Charge of the Committee

- Evaluate “hub and spokes” paradigm
- Review the programming and space requirements
- Evaluate Town-wide resources of interest to seniors (the “spokes”) and how to integrate
- Assess 496 Washington Street site

Committee Members

- Selected for knowledge of community
- Knowledge of seniors and aging issues
- Range of ages
- Fresh Eyes

Committee Members

- Jean Boyle, Wellesley at Home
- Tim Driver, RetirementJobs.com
- David Himmelberger, former Selectman
- Todd Himstead, TMM, Sprague Task Force
- Dona Kemp, TMM, civic volunteer
- Phil Laughlin, TMM, HR Board, Facilities
- Heather Sawitsky, Retirement comty counsel, MPH in senior delivery mechanisms
- Kathleen Woodward, TMM, comty advocate

Work of Committee – Input from Others

- Tolles -Parsons Planning Committee
- Council on Aging
- Architect Bill Sterling
- Concerned Citizens
- Library reps
- Recreation reps
- Board of Health reps

Site Visits within Wellesley

- Existing site at the WCC
- Warren Building
- Proposed site at 496 Washington Street
(American Legion site)
- Proposed parking site on WHA land

Site Visits Outside Wellesley

- Belmont Senior Center
- Hopkinton Senior Center
- Malden Senior Center
- Natick Community Center
- Needham Senior Center

Work of Committee – Other Resources

- Population data review
- Older Americans Act
- Regulations on commercial kitchens
- National Institute of Senior Centers
- Literature search and review of best practices
- Telephone interviews with 6 new centers

Identified Criticisms of Tolles-Parsons

- Current COA utilization too low
- Age 60+ residents move away
- Senior center concept is outdated
- No proof people will utilize new center
- Duplicates underutilized space and programs
- American Legion site too small, not enough parking

Current Demographics

- US Census 2000: 4,780 +60 residents
 - 17.9% of population
- US Census 2010: 5,429 +60 residents
 - 19.4% of population
- Conclusion: +60 population growing in numbers and as a percentage
- Children in the Wellesley schools: 5,032

Demographic Projections: A Grey Tsunami

- +60 population expected to reach 25% of US population within next 20 years
- No evidence that Wellesley is an exception to trend
- Merging of 2 significant trends: Longer life expectancy, Baby Boom bubble

Senior Centers are Alive and Thriving

- In Wellesley's backyard
- 8 new centers in metro west
- Based on fitness, social engagement, intellectual exploration, recreation
- Physically attractive and comfortable
- Need to see one to understand the appeal

If We Build It, Will They Come?

- Survey?
 - How to control for bias
 - Cost

Wellesley, You're Not That Special

■ Predictive Patterns

- New Centers have tripled daily attendance
- Wellesley new buildings have generated sustained increase in usage
- New COA programming very popular
 - Golf tournament
 - Lecture series with Library
 - Seminar with Alan Schechter
- Natick!

Alternative Homes for COA

- Confirmed the Tolles-Parsons Planning Committee Conclusions
 - Warren
 - Community Center
- COA the only Town agency not housed in municipal space

Adequacy of American Legion Site

- Traffic Concerns
- General congestion on Washington Street
- Overlapping needs with St. Paul's – funerals, early release days from school
- Washington Street dangerous to cross or park on

Parking Issues

■ Parking Concerns

- 34 spaces on site
- 41 spaces on Washington Street
- 20 dedicated spaces on proposed WHA lot
- Total of 85 spaces

Perfect Should Not Be Enemy of Good

- Traffic and parking challenges throughout Town; not just a senior issue
- Need to alter behavior in general
 - Carpooling
 - Walking
 - Vans or other transportation systems

Suggestions to Mitigate Problems

- Deepen parking spaces on Washington Street
- Pedestrian crosswalk with timed light
- COA Van service
- Use of specialized vans during school hours
- Sticker system

Positive Relationship with St. Paul's is Reasonable Goal

- Determine safest pick up spot
- Exclusive rights?
 - School pick up
 - Funerals
- Expanded off street parking for St. Paul's on weekends
- Older parishioners

Proposed Collaborative Model

- Center to house lunch program, social spaces, offices, rooms for core programming
- Programming supplemented by programming offered by other town departments
- Some programming brought onto site from other town departments
- Master calendar incorporating all dept offerings

Programming Moved Out of Center

- The Library
 - Computer Room
 - Wakelin Room
- The Warren Building
 - Pottery room with kiln
 - Cooking class room
 - Gym
- The Community Center
 - Rooms for large gatherings
 - Dining events
- The High School
 - Cafeteria and auditorium

Programming Transferred to Center

- Wellness Clinics by Board of Health
- Some book groups now at library
- Duplicate bridge (oversubscribed at Warren)
- Exercise classes designed for the elderly
- Introductory classes to showcase offerings of other departments

Programming with Wellesley at Home

- Center would enhance Wellesley at Home's programming
- Would attract more seniors to the Center
- Community support of a growing national movement

Programming using other Resources

- Walking groups, hikes, orienteering, surveying offered through NRC or Rec
- Volunteer Opportunities for Youth: computer trouble shooting assistance, intergenerational bands, community service (yard work, etc.)
- Volunteer Opportunities for Seniors: tutoring, mentoring entrepreneurs, career counseling

Benefits of Collaborative Model

It's Not Just the Buildings

- Expanded programming
- Intergenerational opportunities for those who want them
- Reduced traffic and parking issues
- Elimination of duplicate programs
- Expansion of options
- Closer coordination among town departments

Design Implications of Model

- Primary elements
 - Comfortable socializing area
 - Appropriately sized Kitchen
 - Flexible activity spaces
 - Adequate office space
 - A light and airy environment

To Sum Up

- Population is increasing
- Resources are inadequate
- Innovative Models Can Address Needs
- Focus on ways to enable people to remain physically fit, socially engaged and intellectually challenged
- Benefits both seniors and the community as a whole
- Encourage Selectmen to move forward

Thank you!

- Tolles-Parsons Planning Committee
- Council on Aging
- Gail Thieme
- Representatives of other Departments
- Committee members